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DIST: 25 JUNE 1982

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WARNING: INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE.
REPORT CLASS -S E C R E T--WNINTEL-- [redacted] 3.5(c)
COUNTRY: ARGENTINA/INTERNATIONAL
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF BRIGADIER GENERALS OF THE ARGENTINE ARMY ON THE ERRORS MADE BY FORMER PRESIDENT LEOPOLDO GALTIERI [redacted]

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1. ON 18 JUNE 1982, THE DAY AFTER THE ARGENTINE ARMY ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO REMOVE PRESIDENT LEOPOLDO ((GALTIERI)), THE ARMY'S BRIGADIER GENERALS MET AND DISCUSSED THE FOLLOWING ERRORS MADE BY GALTIERI'S GOVERNMENT:

A. GALTIERI DID NOT CONSULT WITH THE ARMY LEADERSHIP PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION TO ATTACK THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. THIS, BY ITSELF, NECESSITATED HIS REMOVAL, BUT HE OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT BE REMOVED WHILE COMBAT WAS UNDERWAY. WITHIN THE ARMY, GALTIERI'S SUPPORT DROPPED DAILY WHILE THE FIGHTING CONTINUED:

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HIS REFUSAL TO FACE THE FACTS ABOUT ARGENTINA'S DEFEAT IN THE LAST DAYS OF HIS PRESIDENCY SWAYED THE OPINIONS OF THOSE ARMY OFFICERS WHO HAD NOT MADE UP THEIR MINDS ABOUT HIM AND LED TO HIS REMOVAL. THE BRIGADIER GENERALS WERE ESPECIALLY OPPOSED TO HIS CONTINUING IN OFFICE.

B. GALTIERI DEMONSTRATED VERY POOR JUDGMENT BY HAVING DECEIVED THE PEOPLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS DURING THE WAR; THE ABRUPT SHIFT FROM "GREAT ARGENTINE VICTORIES" TO "TOTAL DEFEAT" COULD HAVE PROVOKED MASSIVE RIOTING BUT FORTUNATELY DID NOT.

C. GALTIERI'S ADVISORS DECEIVED SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES REGARDING THE REALITIES OF THE WAR. THIS WAS INEXCUSABLE.

D. THE GOVERNMENT'S TALK ABOUT POSSIBLE ALLIANCES WITH CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION SCARED THE MODERATES AND EVEN SOME OF THE HARD-LINE ELEMENTS IN THE ARMED FORCES, THOUGH SOME OF THE MOST HARD-LINE NATIONALISTS STILL SUPPORT THIS OPTION. THIS TALK WAS VIEWED BY THE BRIGADIER GENERALS AS IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR BASED ON IDEAS THAT HAD NOT BEEN STAFFED OUT AND WERE POTENTIALLY CAPABLE OF MOVING ARGENTINA OUT OF THE FREE WORLD AND INTO THE COMMUNIST ORBIT.

E. GALTIERI WAS MUCH TOO QUICK IN HIS ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE WAS VIEWED AS THE PRESIDENT WHO HAD DONE THE MOST TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES HAD TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN, BUT GALTIERI ACTED FOOLISHLY TO MOVE SO FAST IN DESTROYING SO MANY LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE MODERATES WERE EXTREMELY DISTURBED BY THE JOINT COMMAND'S COMMUNIQUE NUMBER 166, WHICH SAID THAT THE LAST MINUTE INFUSION OF U.S. TECHNICAL AID HAD ALLOWED THE UNITED KINGDOM TO WIN; THIS WAS SEEN AS NEEDLESSLY BAITING THE UNITED STATES. THE MODERATES ALSO BELIEVED THAT GALTIERI WAS OFFENSIVE TO THE U.S. PRESIDENT DURING THE LATTER'S PHONE CALL ON THE NIGHT OF 1 APRIL, AND THIS RUDENESS LED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO BE LESS SYMPATHETIC TO ARGENTINA. THE MODERATES ALSO BELIEVED THAT THE "GOOD OFFICES" OF THE U.S. SECRATARY OF STATE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO SUCCEED BECAUSE OF GALTIERI'S STUBBORN INSISTENCE THAT HE COULD RETAKE THE ISLANDS WITH MAXIMUM GLORY FOR ARGENTINA.

2. THE BRIGADIER GENERALS AGREED THAT THE ABOVE ERRORS MUST BE RECTIFIED, BUT THEY DISAGREED ON HOW THIS COULD BEST BE DONE. THEY WERE UNITED, HOWEVER, IN THE BELIEF THAT THE ARMY MUST NOT COME OUT OF THIS WHOLE AFFAIR LOOKING AS IF IT HAS BEEN WEAKENED AS AN INSTITUTION.

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REPORT CLASS--S E C R E T--WARNING NOTICE--INTELLIGENCE SOURCES
AND METHODS INVOLVED--[redacted] 3.5(c)

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